

PPI Program Spotlight

U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics



Producer Price Index Data Via the Internet

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has made producer price index (PPI) series and news releases available via the Internet. BLS provides Internet access through a World Wide Web (WWW) home page and a file transfer protocol (FTP) service.

Retrieving PPI data from the BLS WWW site

Among other things, the WWW site offers news releases and most PPI historical data. Using a WWW browser, enter the BLS home page address (<http://stats.bls.gov>). After clicking the "Data" button on the home page, there are five ways to retrieve PPI data.

- **Most Requested Series** is a form-based application which allows the user to quickly obtain PPI time series data by selecting from a list of the most commonly requested time series including "all commodities" and the stage-of-processing indexes (e.g., finished goods). Within each list, any one or all of the time series shown can be selected. The user can choose date ranges and output options prior to executing the query.
- **Selective Access** is a form-based query application designed for users unfamiliar with the PPI coding structure. It guides the user through the PPI classification system by listing index titles and does not require use of commodity or industry (SIC) codes. Data retrieved are based on a query formulated by selecting data characteristics from lists provided. The user can choose date ranges and output options prior to executing the query.
- **News Releases** contains the most current press release produced by the PPI program. The release contains text explanations of aggregate index movement provided by PPI economists. It also contains pre-formatted data (tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) including most aggregates and selected commodity indexes.
- **Series Report** is a form-based application which uses PPI time series identifiers (commodity or

SIC codes) as input in extracting data according to a specified set of date ranges and output options. This application provides the most efficient path for those users who are familiar with the format of PPI time series identifiers. Up to 300 indexes can be extracted at one time.

For PPI data, there are two basic formats to identify specific time series. For commodity codes and stage-of-processing codes, enter a "wpu" prefix (not seasonally adjusted) or a "wps" prefix (seasonally adjusted). For industry product codes enter a "pcu" prefix and a "#" between the fourth and fifth characters of the product code. *In both cases, no spaces are required.*

Example:

Commodity code wpusop3000	Will provide data for: Finished goods, not seasonally adjusted
wps063	Drugs and pharmaceuticals, seasonally adjusted
Product code pcu28__#	Will provide data for: Chemicals and allied products, not seasonally adjusted
pcu3711#111	Passenger cars

Note that the first product code uses two underscores as placeholders to complete the reference to a two-digit product code time series.

- **Economy at a Glance** is a table which contains current data on various economic indicators produced by BLS. The user can also view these key time series graphically.

Retrieving PPI data from the BLS FTP site

Given limitations on the amount of data users can extract from applications provided on the BLS WWW site, the FTP server is best suited for those requiring access to either a large volume of time series data

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or other PPI-related documentation (e.g., seasonal factor and relative importance tables). For increased efficiency, it is suggested that users download files without opening, if their Internet browser permits. The FTP site can be accessed at (<ftp://ftp.bls.gov>).

Data and documentation available for download include:

- | | Directory: |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • SIC Current Series | /pub/time.series/pc |
| • SIC Discontinued Series | /pub/time.series/pd |
| • Commodity Series | /pub/time.series/wp |
| • Special Requests | /pub/special.requests/ppi |
| • Latest News Release | /pub/news.release/ppi.txt |

The FTP site maintains files to help with searches and downloads. These files are centrally located in the **/pub/doc** directory. Within this directory, go to the **overview.doc** file for an overview relating to all BLS data available through the FTP

site. For *commodity-based PPI data* (which appear in tables 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8 of the PPI monthly detailed report), the program help file is **wp.doc**. For *industry-based PPI data* (which appear in tables 4, 5, 9, 10, and 11 of the monthly PPI report), the file is **pc.doc**. For industry-based time series that have been discontinued, go to **pd.doc**. (These and other help files are also maintained within each of the five directories listed above.)

Additional information

The PPI home page (<http://stats.bls.gov/ppihome.htm>) contains contract escalation information, an explanation of the PPI, and other documentation.

For questions or comments regarding PPI data classification, methodology, or data availability on the Internet, send e-mail to labstat.helpdesk@bls.gov or call the Section of Index Analysis and Public Information at (202) 606-7705.